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This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claims 1-7 (canceled).

Claim 8 (new): An isolated mammalian RNA fraction that enhances the amplification of PrP<sup>Sc</sup>, said RNA fraction characterized by:

- (a) being isolated from brain tissue;
- (b) being sensitive to degradation by DNase-free pancreatic RNase, RNase A, and RNase T1;
- (c) being resistant to degradation by RNase V1 and RNaseH;
- (d) not binding to an oligo dT column; and
- (e) containing RNA of greater than 300 nucleotides as determined by ultrafiltration.

Claim 9 (new): A kit for identifying the presence of PrP<sup>Sc</sup> comprising the RNA fraction of claim 8.